

**United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Criminal Investigation Division  
Investigative Activity Report**

**Case Number:**

1000-0494

**Case Title:**

Cooke Aquaculture Fish Farm Release

**Subject of Report:**

2018-05-04 Interview of [REDACTED]

**Reporting Office:**

Seattle, WA, Area Office

**Activity Date:**

May 4, 2018

**Reporting Official and Date:**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

11-MAY-2018, Signed by: [REDACTED]

**Approving Official and Date:**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
18-MAY-2018, Approved by: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**SYNOPSIS**

On May 4, 2018, I conducted an interview of [REDACTED] about his interactions with the Cooke Aquaculture Net Pen incidents in July and August of 2017.

**DETAILS**

On May 7, 2018, I conducted an interview of [REDACTED] about his interactions with the Cooke Aquaculture Net Pen incidents in July and August of 2017. After being notified of the identity of the interviewing agent and the nature of the interview, [REDACTED], in substance, provided the following information:

**BACKGROUND:**

[REDACTED]

**JULY 2017 INCIDENT:**

On July 25, 2017, he was dispatched by Culbertson Marine to take the tugboat "Quilceda" and assist Cooke Aquaculture near the net pens located at Cypress Island, Washington. At approximately 6:00 PM, he arrived on site at Net Pen #2. [REDACTED] was onboard during this time. The weather was good but he noticed that there was a "pretty good", meaning swift, current happening when they arrived on scene.

He noticed that Net Pen #2 was basically "falling apart" and straining against the anchors on the northeast side of the net pen. He would describe the net pen and being bundled up into a "U" shape and the entire system under was straining. The walkways in the center of the net pen were submerged and rolled over onto their side.

While he was approaching, he noticed the Lovric tugboat with [REDACTED] operating, Cooke's "Clam Digger"

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and several other small boats attempting to hold the net pen together. He thought that the net pen was going to completely collapse at first, but then the tide shifted and the net pen's position began to improve.

He stood by for approximately ten minutes and then was ordered to nose into the net pen on the west side, near the shoreline, and began pushing eastbound. He was in the middle of the other two pushing vessels when he noticed that the net pen was "buckling" under the strain of the tugs and the swift tide. After an undetermined amount of time, he was released from the net pen and returned to port. He knows that after he left, the Millennium Star tugboat arrived and hooked up to the net pen with a bridle.

**AUGUST 2017 INCIDENT:**

In August of 2017, he is unsure of the exact date, but he and [REDACTED] were dispatched to the Cypress Island area for a response to the Cooke Aquaculture net pens. When they arrived, they found Net Pen #2 in worse shape and even more buckled than in July.

The Lindsey Foss tug was attached to Net Pen#2 and was pulling on the net pen in attempt to straighten the net pen. He tied the Quilceda off to Net Pen #1 and awaited instructions. He never pushed on Net Pen #2.

**NET PEN THOUGHTS:**

He could see the nets of Net Pen #2 were full of seaweed and mussels in both the July and August incidents. He could look straight down the net line from his vessel and see how dirty the nets were while he was connected to Net Pen #2. He also saw the net being pushed by the current because of the material and that the net was gathering under the vessels while they were pushing the net pen. While the nets were pulled out of the water in August, he saw the large amount of fouling on the nets.

During one of his brief conversations with an unknown Cooke employee, the employee informed him that Cooke worked on washing the net pens between the July and August incidents.

During the July incident, he took approximately thirty pictures of the incident and has shared those with the Culbertson company.